

# LET THE BIBLE SPEAK SERIES

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## Living While Dead

We begin our study this morning by a reading from 1 Timothy 5:3 "Honor widows who are really widows. But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God." The idea expressed here is that a widow with no children, who is destitute or in need, should be honored or supported by the church, while one with children should be supported or cared for by her children. Paul then addresses a widow who lives in pleasure rather than serving the Lord and declares that she is "dead while she lives." In other words she is alive physically, but dead spiritually. The one who lives in pleasure literally "gives herself to pleasure." That is she lives to fulfill bodily appetites, eating and drinking, and demanding the dainties of life. The widow indeed aims in life to please God. The phrase "dead while she liveth" literally translated means "living, having died." Physically alive, but spiritually dead. Just how does one reach such a state? The word "check-up" is both common and popular in today's language. 1. Cars need check-ups—to get license plates) 2. Houses—termites 3. Bank books and records 4. Medical exams etc. There is also a need for a spiritual check-up. 1. Paul said "examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you..." 2Cor 13:5. 2. What is your spiritual condition today? Do you know? Do you Care? 3. Have you ever left you were losing your Christianity? 4. Many have, and many will. 2Peter 2:20-21 "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them, But it has happened to them according to the true proverb "a dog returns to his own vomit," and "a sow having washed, to her wallowing in the mire." In this lesson today we want to talk about dying. 1. Not pleasant, but necessary. Just as physical ailments carry certain symptoms, so also do spiritual.

Are you living, having died? Are you currently dying? How do you know? What gage do you use? Is it reliable? We know that when we die physically there are signs. Can we not also know when we are dying spiritually? Surely we can. I would like to suggest, first of all, that you can know that you are spiritually dead when I. The Story of The Cross No Longer Moves You. 1. The story of the cross moved the man from Ethiopia in Acts 8. (Imagine the joy when he learned of Christ's love and death. (Isaiah 53) This was a one time sermon. It did not take months and months of study. He was moved, and he acted. What a wonderful testimony to the power of the gospel. 2. You obeyed the gospel because the story of the cross moved you. It must continue to motivate us Acts 4:12 "Neither is there salvation in any other for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." 3. The Lord's supper helps us remember the great price paid for our salvation. Mt.26:26-28 4. What a shame that some view it, however, as mere foolishness. 1Cor. 1:23-25 "we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. It is God's power to save Rom. 1:16 It must be preached to all the world Mk. 16:15-16 5. For many, who once accepted it, it has become nothing more than academic knowledge. Bored when they hear it preached, having lost all excitement. Many can no longer weep over Calvary. If you are no longer moved when you hear it preached--- something is wrong. Story: Very Wealthy English Baron by the name of Fitzgerald, had only one son,

who was the apple of his eye. In his early teens—mother died—resulting in his father devoting himself only more to his son. The Fitzgerald financial holdings greatly increased over time. Much of wealth used to buy art works of the masters. The Son became ill and died and later in life Fitzgerald himself became ill and died also. Before his death he directed that there be an auction in which the entire art collection would be sold. It was valued in the millions of British pounds. A Huge crowd gathered. Among the beautiful paintings there was one that received little attention, it was of poor quality and of his only son. When the auction began, the auctioneer had the attorney read from the will: the first painting to be auctioned was that of “my beloved son.” Few bids, no one interested. The painting received only one bid—an old servant who had known the son, bought it for less than one pound. The bidding stopped and the attorney again read from the will “Whoever buys the painting of my son gets all my art collection. The auction is over.” If you cannot be moved by Calvary—it is truly over for you. You are living, while dead.

You are also dying if: II. You Have Left Your First Love. 1. The church at Ephesus did Rev. 2:4 “Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen...” 2. We obey Jesus because we love him. John 14:15 “If ye love me keep my commandments. This obviously was true in the beginning of our Christian life. 3. Do you remember the joy and excitement, of new found love? 4. Often the years don’t wear well. We lose our love. Instead of moving out of love we move out of habit. 5. If you have left or are leaving, it takes great honesty of heart to admit such. We must not fool ourselves. The poet said: “He is not a disappointment, Jesus is far more to me Than in all my glowing daydreams I had fancied he could be, And the more I get to know him, so the more I find him true, And the more I long that others should be led to know him too. He is not a disappointment he has saved my soul from sin, All the guilt and all the anguish which oppressed my heart within He has banished by his presence and his blessed kiss of peace Has assured my heart forever that his love will never cease. He is not a disappointment he is all in all to me Savior, sanctifier, keeper the unchanging Christ is He, He has won my hearts affections and he meets my every need He is not a disappointment for he satisfies me indeed. You are also dying spiritually when: III. Church Services Bore You. Do you have difficulty waiting for the dismissal prayer? Do you daydream about what you will do when the service is over? Do you say “I just don’t get anything out of church anymore?” Are you like the Jews who said “when will the Sabbath be over?” Some blame it on the preacher: “He is not interesting” or “He doesn’t challenge me.” Why do we have church services?

Surely God could have planned it so that we could stay at home and dispense with our duty while there. Why come together? The obvious answer is seen in the fact that while together we help and encourage one another to higher and better spiritual conduct. Acts 2:42 and Acts 20:7 In the assembly we are encouraged, strengthened, and renewed. We receive the benefit of mutual worship and praise. Singing, edification, Remembrance. What is Growth Really all about? 2Cor.8:7 “But as you abound in everything, in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us, see that you abound in this grace also.” Here we have an indication that the church in Corinth was “excelling” in a number of ways. As we excel or grow individually, so does the church. As we die individually, so does the church. We must become excited about growth. If we don’t, we are likely to die. IV. You Have Lost Your Interest In Saving Souls. Perhaps at one time you were excited about leading someone to Christ. “He that winneth souls is wise.” But now you no longer study or teach or visit or preach or invite. You even give evidence of being ashamed of the gospel. Some think that “it’s the preacher’s job.” Acts 8:4 “They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching...” Luke 19:10 “Come to seek and save the lost...” Mk. 16:15-16 We are told that the angels rejoice when a sinner repents Luke 15:10. All heaven is aglow when someone is saved. What about you? When was the last time you invited someone to a meeting or to a church service When was the last time you arranged a study with

someone? When was the last time you sought help in how to lead men to Christ? Are you dying? You can also know you are dying when V. The Things Of The World Attract You? It is possible to allow the things of the world to lead us away from God. Luke 8:13-14 "But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity." James 1:14-14 "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God..."

We are worldly to the extent that the things of the world satisfy us. When they demand and receive our Love, Affection, Time, Energy----we are worldly. 1John 2:15-17

We can become worldly by working and neglecting the church or our duty as much as going to the wrong place or doing the wrong thing. VI. Are You Fooling Yourself? (Syndrome) The most deadly cancer is the undetectable kind. The Christian can fall into the trap of think all is well "Let him that thinketh he standeth..." Some think God is too loving to punish "little sins. This is obviously wrong when viewed in the light of plain bible teaching. God must and will punish the evil-doer. Some fool themselves by thinking "I'm better than some other people," this, however, has no special saving merit. We fool ourselves by thinking all is well, when in reality it is not. You can also know you are dying, VII. By Failing To Do What You Know You Should Do. Most Christians are familiar with the will of God for their lives. Yet they drift, day by day, without doing it. Why? They plan on tomorrow "Go to now ye that say tomorrow..." To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not..." James 4:17 Many know they need to: Obey the gospel Give more to the Lord Visit the sick, widows and orphans Study to grow and develop there by growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord. It's a danger sign to fail to do what you know should be done. It betrays an attitude of heart that is dangerous. What about you? Are you dying? How fearful to experience the gradual loss of consciousness knowing you are losing your life, how much more fearful to die spiritually.